EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Report No. 83:6

SUMMARY OF COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES AVAILABLE TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS

I. Peters

REPORTS

REPORT NO.: 83:6

TITLE: SUMMARY OF COMPREHENSION ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES AVAILABLE TO CLASSROOM TEACHERS

GRANT NO.: DG 345

AUTHOR(S): I. Peters

PROJECT DIRECTOR: (if different from author)

PROJECT SITE OR SAMPLE:

The report is based on a study or project funded by the ERIBC Grants Program. The report may be reproduced in whole or in part, but the author(s) and ERIBC must be credited.

ERIBC takes no responsibility for the work as it was carried out, or the conclusions drawn by the author(s).

This report is available on a loan basis (in B.C. only) or a purchase basis at the cost of $4.70 from the,

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
Suite 400 - 515 West 10th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Z 4A8

Telephone: 873-3801

G.S. 499
Grant #345

Summary of Comprehension Assessment Techniques Available to Classroom Teachers.

Irene Peters
Aug.15/82

Current literature on reading comprehension offers a plethora of information on the reading process and comprehension, but the various psychologists, psycholinguists, linguists and even reading educators often make a weak, or no attempt at all to relate the information to instruction and assessment techniques that classroom teachers can use. A lot of current research offers

> ...too many isolated studies; too little replication; practically no long term studies; and too much unquestioning allegiance to one position. (Durkin, 1981).

One of the things that has caused this fragmented approach is that the task at hand, that of understanding the reading process, is a complex and multidimensional one. However, while all the interesting questions are being asked by the various disciplines, the classroom teacher is still faced with the problem of trying to find out whether or not a student has internalized and understood the material presented. It is important to know how factors like memory, previous world knowledge and reasoning ability affect comprehension. It should also be recognized that teachers have a responsibility to be aware of current research and theory. However, the value of research and theory is in the interpretation and application to the classroom; to the actual learning process. Most teachers are not familiar with research technology, which seems to have become quite divorced from the so called "practical" aspect of education-teaching. Also the dailiness of teaching and the nature of much research make it impractical for teachers to go through the interpretation and application process. The result is often a too heavy reliance on assessment techniques offered by basal reader publishers and other commercially prepared material. This paper will attempt to outline the current methods available to the classroom teacher for assessing comprehension, and make some judgement about their utility and validity from that perspective.

Before proceeding, it is first necessary to try to establish some definition of what comprehension is. There is general agreement in the current literature that what we know about reading comprehension indicates that it is an interactive process. Grammatical and semantic cues in the text, and language patterns and prior knowledge of the

reader combine to connect "the information from the text to the information stored in the reader's head"(Wilson and Hammill,1982). Goodman and Burke describe this as the "meaningful interaction between the language of the reader and the language of the author" (1972a). Teachers also have access to various taxonomies of comprehension skills. These taxonomies label the skills, which are sometimes called processes, in different ways. Generally they are referred to as literal, interpretive, critical and creative. There is also a tendency to state or imply that there is a hierarchy in the skill development with literal being at the bottom and creative being at the top. These skills are then assigned further subskills in each category. So teachers have the complex "meaningful interaction" definition, and they have what is usually thought of as a working definition of comprehension. That is the comprehension skills that are thought to be necessary for the interaction to occur. We have the task of not only trying to understand a very complex process, but of somehow translating that understanding to a teachable and assessable reality.

Given this range in defintion, what characteristics, from a teacher's perspective, should an assessment technique have? Teachers rarely make explicit,comprehensive statements about these concerns, but in my experience both as a classroom teacher and as a Learning Assistant it seems the most commonly asked questions are the following:

1. Why are we doing this?

With a lot of the traditional assessment techniques such as standardized tests under heavy attack, and the results of basal mastery tests often contradicting common sense, this question is being increasingly asked.

2. What can I do with the information after the assessment?

Summative evaluation is not enough. Teachers want information that will help make instructional decisions about what the student needs to strengthen weaknesses and develop strengths in comprehension.

3. Is it something I can use to gain valuable information without using an unreasonable amount of time?

Too often comprehension assessment does not reflect what the teacher

knows about the student from daily interaction. Every teacher has known the frustration the Goodmans speak of in a recent article

> Teachers face the absurd situation of having voracious readers labelled non-readers because they can't meet criterion levels on skill mastery tests, while ineffective readers are labelled excellent for having mastered the test.(1981)

Time constraints are always a problem. The unfortunate result is that if a teacher feels there is a particular problem with a student's reading ability, the student is usually sent out to the Learning Assistant or other district personnel for assessment. The teacher misses the opportunity to gain valuable insights into the reading process, and also begins to feel that he/she would not be competent to make this kind of assessment. Quite the opposite is true; the teacher usually has a far better total picture of the child to bring to the assessment than does the person who spends only a brief time with the child in a relatively artificial setting.

To summarize and clarify then, the following three criteria will be used to make some judgement about the methods that are available to teachers to assess comprehension.

1. Is the assessment technique based on current reading research and theory?
2. Does this technique have value not only as an assessment tool, but as a technique that will help make instructional decisions?
3. Can it be used effectively by a classroom teacher without sacrificing validity or requiring an unreasonable amout of teacher time.

This paper will not include the method that many teachers use almost instinctively, and upon which I feel many of the most accurate and useful assessments are made. This is the ongoing type of assessment that teachers use daily in instruction. The kind of assessment that is made by astute observation and questioning during oral discussions and in written comprehension exercises, whether they be in Reading, Science, Social Studies, or anything that requires that, "meaningful interaction" between student and print. Unfortunately, according to some research this ideal assessment happens rather infrequently in classrooms. One study (Ives,1966) found that 97% of teacher developed questions focused on literal comprehension. Another study by Durkin (1978-1979), found that a disproportionate amount of classroom time went to assessing comprehension, but less than 1%

went into actually teaching it.

The question that comes to mind is, "Why bother assessing comprehension if we are not teaching it?" It is very likely that teachers are assessing the defined skills rather than the degree of "meaningful interaction". Teachers seem to be using the working definition of comprehension almost exclusively. Since we tend to think that assessment occurs so we can make instructional decisions, the assessment technique used has a great deal of influence on instructional practices.

Before turning to the main focus of this paper, it will be necessary to define its scope. By looking at what is available to teachers, I mean not only what can one gain access to, but what is within the range of a classroom teacher's expertise. Also this paper will not look at specific instruments but rather at the techniques these instruments use to assess comprehension. There are a multitude of instruments available for which Buros' Mental Measurement Yearbook provides far more articulate and comprehensive reviews than could possibly be achieved here.

A good place to begin is with the most widely used method of comprehension assessment. The method used is to test students' competence in the various subskills that are assigned to the comprehension processes or skills. How well does this technique meet the requirements of the three criteria outlined? Looking at the first, is it based on current research and theory? It seems to be the very antithesis of both. If reading comprehension is an interactive process, then as Goodman and Burke point out

> You cannot know a process by listing its ingredients or labelling its parts; you must observe the effect of the parts as they interact with each other...the way a person functions as he reads cannot be determined by examining his performance on a series of exercises related to isolated aspects of the reading process.(1972b).

Because this technique has been widely used by basal masteries and standardized survey and diagnostic reading tests, it has also become a way of thinking about comprehension for many teachers. Whether they are using commercially prepared instruments or not, it has become a way of assessing comprehension. What is even worse is that it has become a way of teaching comprehension, if Durkin's

study is indicative of what is happening in classrooms in general. It is interesting to note a further observation by the Goodmans.

> A movement some call a cult of efficiency now worships technology, often confusing it with science. This movement is based on some of the premisis of modern industrial management with catch phrases like..."accountability", "performance criteria".
>
> Applied to reading education this movement has taken existing tests based on inadequate and outmoded knowledge, and made them the determinants of curriculum by imposing a test-teach-test model. It has combed out of basal reading programs the skill sequences and turned them into management systems often making "mastery" of the skills the sole means to judge pupil achievment. (1981)

This technique has appeal for teachers because it takes comprehension out of the somewhat abstract "meaningful interaction" realm, and gives them something observable to assess. Its appeal lies in the fact, that with accountability ever before them, it is something they can get a handle on.

In looking at the second criterion, how does this technique help make instructional decisions? If what is being assessed is arranged in a neat hierarchy, it is so much easier to see where you should be going. Unfortunately, research is still most inconclusive on this point. It seems that the hierarchy is far more discernible in curriculum guides and taxonomies than it is in the cognitive processes.

In reference to the third criterion, nothing more needs to be said about validity, and if we are wasting our time, why bother? These skill taxonomies can be helpful in teaching stategies as long as they don't become ends in themselves. However, when using them in assessment, we have to remember that the part does not constitue the whole.

Another method that is used to assess comprehension is the one used in Informal Reading Inventories(IRI), whether they be commercially prepared or teacher made. Although there are variations, the format is generally the same. Readability is either determined by word lists or by simply having the child start with the easiest passage. Comprehension is assessed by asking questions that require the student to use the various comprehension processes. Although

there are no absolute guidelines, the student will continue with the passage-question process until he/she falls below 90% in word recognitionand 50% in comprehension, which is determined by an average of the oral and silent readings. All oral reading error are usually given equal weight, that is there is a quantitative error count. A generally acceptable level for what can be considered instructional is 95% word recognition and 75% comprehension.

Looking at this method in terms of the first criterion causes some problems. The commercially prepared instruments have received much criticism. Some of the more common concerns are validity of reading levels, the definition of errors, the progression of difficulty in passages and validity and reliability of the instruments themselves. Both teacher made and commercially prepared instruments assess comprehension through the use of questions, and a recent review of the most commonly used commercial inventories concluded that, "A large majority of the questions appear to tap factual recall" (Jongsma and Jongsma, 1981). If teacher made inventories are being used, it is usually recommended that the teacher choose passages from instructional material. Some interesting research by Templeton, Cain and Miller that measured the underlying logical structure of basal readers concluded that

> ...while the surface structure of the basal reader stories become more complex, the underlying logical structure remains the same across grade level. (1981).

If what is increased in our basal readers if vocabulary and sentence length, what are we assessing when we use basal passages for an IRI? Vocabulary is one of the variables in comprehension, but here again we seem to be looking at one of the parts instead of the whole. This too has implications for the second criterion of instructional decisions. We are cautioned by this same study, that we "should not be surprised by children's apparent inconsistent comprehension patterns". This is not very comforting knowledge when making instructional decisions. As for the commercially prepared instruments, the survey referred to earlier states that;

> None of the authors gives evidence that the reading levels established through IRI testing actually correspond to classroom performance. The validity of the inventories hinges entirely on readability estimates.(Jongsma and Jongsma, 1981).

All of the inventories surveyed used conventional readability formulae such as Dale-Chall, Fry, and Spache. Since these formulae are used to determine readability levels in basals, it might be assumed that these inventories increase in difficulty only at what Templeton, Cain and Miller call the "surface" level, that is only in vocabulary and sentence length.

What about the third criterion? After considering some of the problems with using an IRI, it is apparent that a great deal of time and careful thought must go into a teacher made IRI, and careful interpretation must be made of both teacher made and commercially prepared instruments if reasonably valid results are to be obtained. Considering time limitations, one can understand why teachers tend to send children out for this kind of assessment.

A method for assessing comprehension that has received increased attention in recent years is that of using a cloze technique. In the past this technique was thought of primarily as a way of assessing readability. However, the original instrument created by Ebbinghaus in 1897 was used to assess reading comprehension, intelligence, achievement and various other things. There are a variety of ways to implement this technique, but generally there is either a random or rational deletion of words from a passage. The random cloze usually deletes every 5th word, but the amount can range from 5 to 10. The first and last sentence are usually left intact. There is still some controversy about how the deletion rate affects overall scores. The rational cloze selects words for deletion according to some guiding principle, that is words from a certain class, and with both random and rational cloze the student has to fill in the appropriate word for completion. The word can be from a list, that is multiple choice, or simply the pre-determined right word. In some cases the procedure will allow use of a synonym or another word from the same word class. There seems to be some agreement that the rational cloze is the more valid procedure for assessing comprehension. Research in this area, (Tuinman, Blanton, Gray, 1975) has indicated that what random cloze tends to measure is redundant, or grammatical information rather than whether or not the student has understood the content. This research

also indicated that random cloze is "sentence bound", that is it measures sentence comprehension rather than total passage comprehension.

In terms of the first criterion, although there is not complete agreement, the following statement summarizes the general feeling about the validity of using a rational cloze technique.

> ...cloze, a task involving both reader expectation and language cues, has been viewed as an appropriate vehicle for focusing on meaning.(Marino,1981a)

In looking at the second criterion there are some problems. The idea of using cloze to assess comprehension is relatively new in the modern educational setting. In order to use rational cloze to make instructional decisions the teacher would have to be quite knowledgeable in order to design and select appropriate passages. There are some specific guidelines (Marino, 1981b) for selecting and designing cloze passages that supposedly require the student to use things such as prior knowledge and semantic and syntactic information, and to "make logical leaps"(Marino, 1981c). However these kinds of guidelines are not available enough to ensure effective use of rational cloze, which of course very much affects the third criterion.

Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) probably provides the most complete assessment technique available to the classroom teacher. Although the purpose of this paper is not to look at specific instruments this inventory is unique in that it has evolved directly from the psycholinguistic reading theory, which is currently the most widely accepted theory of the reading process. The idea is that we use three kinds of information cues to make sense of printed material. Oral responses to print are cued by an interaction of the reader's semantic(ideas), syntactic(grammatical), and graphophonemic(patterns and sounds of letters)systems. All of these components of the language of the reader cue the oral response. If the oral response doesn't make sense, the reader will go back to find out where he/she went wrong and try to reuse his information in a different way to make sense. If if does make sense, the meaning can be stored or produced orally. Reading is then interactive, or the "meaningful interaction" referred to earlier in Goodman and Burke's definition. The RMI is based on the belief that children's oral read-

ing errors or "miscues" are not random, but are "cued by the thought and language of the reader"(Goodman, Burke 1972c), in the attempt to gain meaning from reading material. By analyzing the miscues one can determine which stategies the child is using in the reading process that are helpful or are interferring with the attempt to gain meaning. There is also a retelling procedure to determine how much of the story that was orally read the child can understand and remember. The retelling is then judged relative to the kind and frequency of miscues that occurred.

The first step in the procedure is to determine the readability for material used. A readability level is appropriate if the student makes mistakes but is still able to continue independently. This is necessary because a minimum of twenty-five miscues are needed for the analysis. The student is then given a passage at this level that has "an identifiable plot or theme"(1972d), that he/she has not read before, and that will require 15-20 minutes of reading. The teacher records the child's oral reading and retelling on tape, and on a worksheet copy of the story, records the text exactly as the child reads it. This includes not just the standard substitutions, omissions and so on, but items such as attempted corrections and anticipation of difficulty with subsequent words. Each miscue is further analyzed by asking nine questions which categorize the miscue in terms of dialect, intonation, graphic similarity, grammatical function, correction, grammatical acceptability, semantic acceptability and meaning change. The miscue is then coded within the category or categories to determine to what extent it was supportive of the effort to gain meaning from the text. The retelling is analyzed and judged relative to the miscues, and the "Comprehension Pattern" is determined to judge how effectively the student is using his reading stategies to gain meaning.

Quite clearly this technique meets the first two criteria, although it is not without limitations. Many critiques have been written on the RMI, but the following excerpt summarizes these limitations fairly well.

> ...the scoring procedures are very cumbersome, the categories are not well defined, and they appear to overlap. Moreover the manual does not present data pretaining to the reliability of the categories nor to their validity in predicting behaviours. (Bryan and Bryan, 1978)

Another commonly voiced complaint is that no norms have been established for error patterns. However, as one reviewer pointed out "the RMI is designed to determine not the level of performance, but the type and quality of performance" (Anastasiow,1978).

It is the third criterion, the element of time, that, despite Goodman and Burke's rather optomistic suggestions to the contrary, make this a technique that has had very little classroom use. This is unfortunate because as Goodman and Burke point out, it can provide "a window into the reading process"(1972e). Perhaps by stating one of their objectives they have identified the most important feature that teachers should look for in an assessment technique.

> It is an attempt to narrow the tremendous gap between research and application which has become almost tradition in education. It reflects the conviction that teachers will be more quick to make changes in reading curriculum and methods when they are provided with an effective procedure that allows them to gain insight into the reading process at the same time that it helps them to evaluate the reading of their students.(1972f)

REFERENCE NOTES

Anastasiow, N.J. The Eighth Mental Measurrements Yearbook, edited by Oscar Krisen Buros. Highland Park, N.J.: The Gryphon Press. Vol. II, p.790.

Bryan, T.H., Bryan, J.H. Understanding Learning Disabilities. Sherman Oaks, Calif.: Alfred Publishing Co.(1978) p.299.

Durkin, D. "What is the Value of the New Interest in Reading Comprehension?", in Language Arts, vol.58, no.2. (1981) pp.23-41.

Durkin, D. "What Classroom Observations Reveal About Reading Comprehension Instruction", in Reading Research Quarterly, vol.14 pp.481-533.

Goodman, Y.E., Goodman, K.S. "Twenty Questions about Teaching Language", in Educational Leadership,March 1981. pp.437-442.

Goodman, K.M., Burke, C. Reading Miscue Inventory Manual: Procedures for Diagnosis and Evaluation. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co.,Inc.,(1972).

Ives, Josephine,P. "The Improvement of Critical Reading Skills", in Problem Areas in Reading-Some Observations and Recommendations, edited by C. Morrison. Provident, R.I. Oxford Press Inc.

Jongsma,K.S., Jongsma,E.A. "Test Review:Commercial Informal Reading Inventories" in The Reading Teacher, vol.34,no.6. March, 1981. pp.697-705.

Marino,J.L. "Cloze Passages: Guidelines for Selection" in Journal of Reading. vol.24,no.6. March 1981. pp.479-483.

Templeton,S.,Cain,C.T., Miller, J.O. "Reconceptualizing Readability: The Relationship between Surface and Underlying Structure Analyses in Predicting the Difficulty of Basal Reader Stories" in The Journal of Educational Research, vol.74, no.6. pp.382-387.

Tuinman,J., Planton, W.E., Gray, G. "A Note on Cloze as a Measure of Comprehension" in The Journal of Psychology, vol.90,no.2. pp.159-162.

Wilson,C.R., Hammill,C. "Inferencing and Comprehension in Ninth Graders Reading Geography Testbooks" , in The Journal of Reading, Fed.1982. pp.424-427.

Conclusions of Summary Paper

1. The most widely used reading comprehension assessment technique, that of measuring competency in isolated reading skills, is contradictory to what we assume to be true about the reading process.

2. Alternate methods of assessing reading comprehension tend to be too time consuming for classroom teacher use, and/or focus on one aspect of comprehension such as vocabulary.

3. Comprehension assessment techniques used affect instruction; teachers assess so they can make instructional decisions. The inadequacies research points to in reading comprehension instruction could be a result of how we are assessing comprehension. Teachers seem to be using the "working model" of comprehension as a result of assessment techniques used.

4. Assessment techniques in reading comprehension should reflect current research and theory. They should provide the "window into the reading process". If teachers are to teach reading as a total language experience, the assessment techniques we use should be consistent with that approach.

5. Because the skills assessment technique appears to be the most widely used method of comprehension assessment in our schools, and because it tends to contradict what we assume to be true about the reading process, this method of assessment bears further investigation.

Procedure Part 1

1. 25 students that had completed Ginn 720's Level 9 basal reader (grade 3 range), and 25 students that had completed Ginn 720's Level 10 basal reader(grade 4 range), were given the respective Ginn Mastery Test for comprehension to determine whether they had achieved mastery at a grade 3 and 4 level according to the Ginn criterion,which is an 80% mastery of specific reading skills at each level. For the level 9, students were chosen randomly from three separate classrooms of grade 3 and 4 students. Level 10 students were chosen randomly from three separate grade 4 and 5 classrooms.
2. These students were then given the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test Form B, Green and Brown Levels, within one week of having written the Ginn 720 Levels 9 and 10 Mastery Tests.
3. The results of the two comprehension assessment techniques were compared to determine if there was a significant discrepancy in results. A discrepancy that would warrant a further examination of the Ginn 720 method of comprehension assessment. See the attached comparison sheets for Levels 9 and 10.

Conclusion

1. Results of the comparison indicate enough discrepancy to warrant further investigation.

Level 9 Comparison

Comparison of results of comprehension assessment for 25 students using Ginn 720 Level 9 Mastery Test and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT), Green Level Form B (grade 3-4 range).

	Ginn 720 raw score of >25 indicates grade 3 competency. Total possible score is 32.	SDRT raw score of >30 indicates grade 3 competency or better. Total possible score is 60.
1.	11*	52
2.	15*	49
3.	16*	53
4.	16*	45
5.	16*	57
6.	17*	50
7.	18*	52
8.	18*	52
9.	19*	43
10.	19*	53
11.	20*	53
12.	21*	43
13.	22*	44
14.	22*	48
15.	22*	54
16.	23*	57
17.	23*	35
18.	23*	50
19.	25*	52
20.	25*	59
21.	26	49
22.	27	56
23.	27	50
24.	27	49
25.	28	50
	80%*	0%*

* indicates below grade 3 competency according to test criterion.

Comparison of results of comprehension assessment for 25 students using Ginn 720 Level 10 Mastery and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT), Green(grade 3-4 range) and Brown (5-8 range), Form B. G indicates Green. B indicates Brown.

	Ginn 720 raw score of > 26 indicates grade 4 competency. Total possible-34	SDRT raw score of >49 on Green and >23 on Brown indicates grade 4 competency or better. Total possible on both-60
1.	13*	B27
2.	17*	B20*
3.	18*	G57
4.	18*	B18*
5.	21*	B32
6.	21*	B30
7.	21*	G57
8.	21*	B36
9.	22*	B30
10.	22*	B42
11.	22*	B28
12.	22*	B15*
13.	24*	B41
14.	24*	B30
15.	24*	B27
16.	24*	G48*
17.	26*	B25
18.	26*	G58
19.	28	G58
20.	28	G55
21.	29	B41
22.	30	G58
23.	30	B34
24.	31	G59
25.	32	B39
	72%*	16%*

*indicates below grade 4 competency according to test criterion.

Procedure- Part 2

1. 25 students who had completed Ginn 720 Level 9 were randomly selected from two elementary schools. These students were given the Ginn 720 Level 9 Mastery Test for comprehension to determine whether they had achieved mastery of the grade 3 reading material according to the Ginn 720 criterion of 80% mastery of specific reading skills.

2. The same 25 students within one week of having written the Ginn 720 Level 9 Mastery, were given the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Form B, Green Level (grade 3-4 range).

3. Within the same week these students were asked to silently read and retell in their own words a story from the Ginn 720 Level 9 basal reader. The story was chosen from Ginn after the Fry's Readability Formula had been applied to two stories at the beginning, the middle and the end of the reader to determine an average level of readability for the reader. The story chosen was within the grade 3 range of difficulty according to Fry's Readability Formula. The student retelling was taped and scored on a retelling outline(see attached)according to the point distribution out of 100 that is used in Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory. Although there are no available norms, the student that scores 50 or better is thought to be making highly effective use of reading stategies according to Goodman and Burke. That criterion was used in this retelling procedure. The following guidelines from the Reading Miscue Inventory were used for administering and scoring the retelling. After the student had completed an uninterrupted retelling, questions were asked to expand the retelling on the basis of the guidelines that state:

> 1. The questions should make use of no specific information not already introduced by the reader.
> 2. The questions should tend to be general in nature so that their formulation does not lead the reader to insights or views which do not grow from his own reading. (Goodman and Burke, 1972, p.25)

For scoring the outline the guidelines used were as follows:

> 1. For categories such as Character Analysis, Events...withhold points for those aspects items not covered in the reader's retelling. Fewer points should be assigned for any item when the reader has recalled only part of the information or has in some way distorted it.
>
> 2. Events...may be recounted in any of several orders without altering their basic relationships.
>
> 3. Fully accept any alternate but appropriate Themes, Plots, Generalizations or Concepts which the reader offers. Fewer points may

be assigned if the reader only supplies some of the aspects related to any of these categories.

4. Total the assigned points from each of the categories to obtain the Retelling Score. (Goodman and Burke, 1972, p.68)

Five students who were not part of the sample were used to help the examiner familiarize herself with the procedure and formulate some standardized question formats before the procedure was used on the actual testing population.

4. The three comprehension scores were compared to determine how the Ginn 720 comprehension technique(skills assessment), compared to the multiple-choice cloze and short passage-question technique used by the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, and the Retelling technique adapted from the Reading Miscue Inventory. See attached comparison of results.

Procedure-Part 2 continued

5. The same procedure that was followed to assess the Ginn 720 Level 9 students was used for the Level 10 assessment. See attached procedure for Level 9 group from G.S. 499 and results of comparison for Level 10.

Results

1. Of the 100 students compared using Ginn 720 Mastery Tests and the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT), 56% were not competent at the appropriate grade level according to Ginn. According to the SDRT 9% were not competent at grade level. All of the 9% that had failed to reach competency according to the SDRT were also students that had not met the Ginn 720 criterion for competency. There was a 47% discrepancy in the students that were considered competent at the appropriate grade level in this comparison.

2. In the sample of 100 students, of the 50 that were compared using all three comprehension assessment techniques, 56% were not competent at grade level according to Ginn, 10% according to the SDRT, and 12% according to the Retelling Procedure. 6% of the 50 failed to reach competency according to all three assessment techniques.

3. In comparing competency of these 50 students according to just the SDRT and the Retelling Procedure there were 6% that failed to meet competency according to either technique. There was a 10% discrepancy between these two measures.

4. In comparing competency of these 50 students according to just Ginn 720 and the Retelling Procedure there were 12% that failed to meet competency according to either technique. There was a 44% discrepancy between these two measures.

Comparison of results of comprehension assessment for 25 students using Ginn 720, Level 9 Mastery Test, the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) Form B, Green Level (grade 3-4 range), and a Retelling Procedure adapted from Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory.

	Ginn 720 raw score of >25 indicates grade 3 competency, /32	SDRT raw score of >30 indicates grade 3 competency or better, /60	Retelling raw score of >49 indicates grade 3 competency, /100
1.	30	59	56
2.	30	58	50
3.	29	57	58.5
4.	28	56	56
5.	27	60	81.5
6.	27	57	63
7.	27	54	51.5
8.	26	58	69
9.	26	54	53.5
10.	26	56	53
11.	26	59	52
12.	25*	54	59
13.	25*	54	51
14.	25*	55	48*
15.	24*	55	66.5
16.	24*	58	55
17.	24*	59	52
18.	23*	55	62
19.	23*	59	53.5
20.	23*	50	52.5
21.	23*	57	50.5
22.	22*	57	52
23.	20*	58	50.5
24.	19*	46	49*
25.	17*	56	52
	56%*	0%*	8%*

*Indicates below grade 3 competency according to test criterion

Comparison of results of comprehension assessment for 25 students using Ginn 720 Level 10 Mastery Test, the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) Form B, Brown Level, and a Retelling Procedure adapted from Goodman and Burk's Reading Miscue Inventory.

	Ginn 720 raw score of >26 indicates grade 4 competency. /34	SDRT raw score of >23 indicates grade 4 competency or better./60	Retelling raw score of >49 indicates grade 4 competency or better./100
1.	34	34	88
2.	33	53	90
3.	31	43	66
4.	31	58	91
5.	31	47	58
6.	31	40	69
7.	31	55	94
8.	31	46	89
9.	27	32	58
10.	27	41	71
11.	27	30	64
12.	26*	25	68
13.	25*	28	73
14.	24*	32	67
15.	23*	27	54
16.	22*	18*	78
17.	22*	36	57
18.	22*	23*	23*
19.	21*	27	60
20.	21*	18*	45*
21.	21*	23*	69
22.	18*	23*	23*
23.	14*	24	24*
24.	14*	26	54
25.	13*	29	56
	56%*	20%*	16%*

*indicates below grade 4 competency according to test criterion

Conclusions

The Ginn 720 Mastery Tests for Level 9 and Level 10 should not be considered adequate assessment techniques for comprehension. There is enough discrepancy when comparing results using alternate assessment techniques to cause serious doubt about using these Mastery Tests to make instructional decisions regarding a student's reading programme and over all Language Arts needs. The Ministry of Education in British Columbia in the Schools Department Circular, (165,82-06-15, ISSN 0225 4158) has cautioned teachers that none of the Ginn 720 test materials are Perscribed or Authorized. The Ministry has requested that Ginn provide information concerning reliability and validity of these tests. They further advise

> there are dangers in making decisions about individual students based upon only one source of information. Data should be gathered from many sources, and the test should comprise only part of the data used in making individual decisions regarding mastery and/or placement..

Goodman and Burke's Retelling technique should be further investigated as a method for comprehension assessment.

Discussion

As can be noted from the Procedure in this research, students were asked to silently read the Ginn selection that was used to assess their comprehension in the Retelling Procedure. This of course differs from the oral reading format that is used in Goodman and Burke's Reading Miscue Inventory. A silent as opposed to an oral reading was chosen for this study because the purpose was to assess rather than diagnose. The following statement summarizes the rationale for using a silent rather than an oral approach.

> Silent reading comprehension is regarded by many experts as the better way of investigating comprehension skills...Higher level skills...inferential reading, and creative reading, for example-are best evaluated when the reader has opportunities for careful, thoughtful contemplation. Responses made in answer to questions challenging the reader to interpret, visualize, analyze, synthesize and apply what s/he has learned from print yield information about the inner processes of reading that is only superficially tapped by oral reading.(Newman 1978)

Needless to say, in the context of teaching rather than research both an oral and a silent reading sample would be a more productive approach. It should also be noted that the Gilmores' (1968) study indicated that the strong correlation that was shown between oral reading error rate and silent reading comprehension is evident only in grades one and two. By grade three there is a definite decline in the correlation. All the students assessed in this study were above grade two, but the retelling outlines that resulted from this study for Ginn 720 Levels 5-8 will be used for students in the grade one to three range. If these outlines are to be used , the teacher doing the assessment might find that the grade one and two students prefer an oral reading. Many have had little or no practice with silent reading. The advantage of this kind of assessment is that it provides an option for the teacher. The other two assessment techniques used in this study do not provide that option.

Using a retelling technique provides another advantage when making instructional decisions. With standardized instruments such as the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (SDRT) it is often difficult for a teacher to relate the information derived from the test to the curriculum used. A study by Jenkins and Pany(1978) concluded

> The data from the present investigation strongly suggest that a basic assumption underlying standardized achievement measures-that they representatively sample different curricula-is largely without support; clear, significant biases appear to exist. The nature of this bias is such that student achievement in a particular curriculum may in no way be reflected by achievement test scores. Such biases must be acknowledged and considered any time a standardized, norm referenced achievement test is used for decision making.

A retelling outline derived from reading material used in the classroom provides the instructional information the teacher requires for comprehension development. It is fairly evident which areas of literal (Character Recall, Events, Plot) or inferential (Character Development, Theme) comprehension can be considered strenghts or weaknesses after a student has completed a retelling. This approach also encourages teachers to develop reading skills by using literature that actually contains all of these elements. Unfortunately basal readers frequently fail to provide this kind of reading material.

In looking at the results from this study, it would seem that most teachers would feel very uncomfortable making instructional decisions based on Ginn 720's Mastery Tests. If they do base their instruction on these test results students might spend a great deal of time working on isolated reading skills to insure they become "competent readers".

Using a retelling procedure definitely has drawbacks in terms of teacher time. The average time for a retelling in this study was eight minutes not including the time it took for the student to read the story. Not included either, is the time it takes to listen to the recording of the retelling and score it. Also a teacher must have the actual time to spend with each student on a one-to-one basis. There is a good pay-off for this time— increased expertise in diagnosing reading problems, better knowledge of individual student's ability— but it is not as time-efficient as a test that can be simultaneously administered to an entire class. The Ginn Masteries and the SDRT both have this time advantage.

Many questions remain to be answered about using a retelling procedure as a comprehension assessment. What can teachers compare

a student's score to? Can norms be developed for this type of assessment or does scoring in areas such as Theme and Character Development rely too heavily on subjective teacher judgement to ever be able to develop reliable norms? Is it desirable to use this technique in a way that does not rely on subjective teacher judgement? What about non-verbal children? Those children that, for a variety of reasons, cannot adequately recount verbally what they have internalized. It would seem that in light of what we are learning about the reading process, particularly in the areas of schema theory and story grammar, the idea of using a retelling procedure as a comprehension assessment technique is one well worth pursuing.

REFERENCE NOTES

Gilmore, John V. and Eunice C. Gilmore. Gilmore Oral Reading Test New York, N.Y: Harcout Brace Jovanovich, 1968.(As cited by Harold Newman in"Oral Reading Miscue Analysis is Good But Not Complete" in The Reading Teacher, May, 1978. p.884.

Goodman, K.M., Burke, C. Reading Miscue Inventory Manual: Procedures for Diagnosis and Evaluation. New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., (1972)

Jenkins, J., Pany, D. "Standardized Achievement Tests-How Useful for Special Education?". Exceptional Children, March, 1978. p.452.

Newman, H. "Oral Reading Miscue Analysis is Good but Not Complete" in The Reading Teacher, May, 1978. p.885.

GINN 720 LEVEL 5 (GRADE 1)

RETELLING OUTLINE: THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

RECALL 15	DEVELOPMENT
Little Billy Goat Gruff	small, smart
Big Billy Goat Gruff	bigger, smart
Big, big, Billy Goat Gruff	biggest, strong, brave
Troll	old, big, mean

EVENTS: 30

There were three billy goats named Gruff, they were Little Billy Goat Gruff, Big Billy Goat Gruff and Big, Big Billy Goat Gruff.

They wanted to eat grass.

They had to cross a bridge to get to the hill where the grass was. A troll lived under the bridge.

Little Billy Goat walks on the bridge and troll threatens to eat him. Little Billy Goat talks him out of it by saying he's just little -- tells him to wait for Big Billy Goat Gruff. He does.

Big Billy Goat walks on bridge and troll threatens to eat him. Big Billy Goat Gruff tells him to wait for Big, Big Billy Goat Gruff. He does.

Big, Big Billy Goat Gruff walks on bridge and troll says he's going to eat him and jumps on the bridge.

They run at each other and Big, Big Billy Goat Gruff pushes troll off bridge.

All three goats go to eat grass up the hill. There is no more troll.

PLOT: 20

How to get to the green grass without being eaten.

How to get rid of the troll.

THEME: 20

Sometimes it is better to try to outsmart someone rather than confront them.

Don't be greedy. If you always want more you could end up with nothing.

No matter how strong you think you are there is always someone stronger.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff

Once there were three billy goats, and the name of the three goats was Gruff.

There was Little Billy Goat Gruff, and Big Billy Goat Gruff. And Big, Big Billy Goat Gruff.

The three Billy Boats Gruff went up the hill. They wanted to eat some green grass.

But on the way up was a bridge.

And under the bridge lived a troll- a big, old troll.

Little Billy Goat Gruff walked on the bridge. Trip, trap! Trip, trap! went the bridge.

"Who's that walking on my bridge?" asked the troll.

"It is I, Little Billy Goat Gruff. I'm going up the hill to eat some green grass," said the little goat.

"You can't walk on my bridge," said the troll.

"I'm going to eat you up!"

Little Billy Goat Gruff said, "Oh, no! Don't eat me. I'm just a little billy goat. Wait for Big Billy Goat."

The troll did wait for Big Billy Goat.

Then Big Billy Goat walked on the bridge. Trip, trap! Trip, trap! went the bridge.

"Who's that walking on my bridge?" asked the troll.

"It is I, Big Billy Goat Gruff. I'm going up the hill to eat some green grass," said the big billy goat.

"I'm going to eat you!" said the troll.

Big Billy Goat Gruff said, "Oh, no! Don't eat me. I'm just a big billy goat. Wait for Big, Big Billy Goat."

The troll did wait for Big, Big Billy Goat.

Then Big, Big Billy Goat Gruff walked on the bridge.

TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP! TRIP, TRAP! went the bridge.

"Who's that walking on my bridge?" asked the troll.

"It is I! " said the big, big billy goat.

"I'm going to eat you! " said the troll.

"YOU are the goat I want."

Then up on the bridge went the troll.

He ran at Big, Big Billy Goat.
But Big, Big Billy Goat ran at the troll.
And down went the troll from the bridge. Down, down, down.
Trip, trap! Trip, trap! Trip, trap!
Now the three billy goats go up the hill to eat grass.
And there is no old troll under the bridge.

GINN 720 LEVEL 6 (GRADE 2)

RETELLING OUTLINE: MOTHER TIME

RECALL: 15

Mother Time	busy, proud
Linda	helpful, kind, smart

EVENTS: 30

Mother Time is busy all the time fixing clocks in her shop and has not learned how to tell time.

No one knows she cannot tell time, and she does not want anyone to find out.

She does not even want Linda, the girl she taught to fix clocks, and who helps her, to find out.

Mother Time decides to trick Linda into teaching her to tell time.

She plans to play a game to trick Linda into teaching her to tell time.

Linda comes in after school and Mother Time suggests they play a game and clean the shop at the same time.

They line up the clocks and as each clock is placed Linda says the time while Mother Time watches.

When they are finished Mother Time reads all the times on the clock correctly.

Mother Time thanks Linda for helping her clean her shop when she leaves.

Linda says she had fun teaching Mother Time to tell time.

PLOT: 20

How can Mother Time learn how to tell time without letting anyone know she can't tell time.

THEME: 20

We shouldn't get so busy that we neglect important things in our lives.

Do not be too proud to admit you need help, or you might miss learning something that is important to learn.

Mother Time

Mother Time fixed clocks.
She had a small shop with clocks from wall to wall.
She had clocks up to the roof.
Mother Time was busy fixing clocks.
She had something to fix all the time.
She was so busy that she had not learned to tell time.
That's right .
Mother Time couldn't tell time.
She could fix the insides of clocks.
But she didn't know how to tell time.
No one knew that Mother Time couldn't tell time.
She didn't want anyone to know, so she didn't even tell Linda.
Linda helped Mother Time.
She could fix clocks too.
Mother Time had helped her learn.
One day Mother Time thought that she would trick Linda.
She thought that she could play a game that would make Linda teach her to tell time.

That day when Linda came in from school, Mother Time said, "Why don't we play a game today? Then you can practice telling time, and I'll get my shop cleaned."

They lined up the clocks.
As they put a clock in place, Linda would read the time.
Mother Time watched.

Just as they were going to put the last of the clocks away, Mother Time said, "I'll read the time on these clocks."

And she did.
Mother Time said the right time for each clock.
She was so happy.

When Linda went home to eat, Mother Time said, "Thank you for helping me clean the shop."

And Linda said, "I had a good time. It was fun to teach you to tell time."

GINN 720 LEVEL 7 (GRADE 2)

RETELLING OUTLINE: MONKEY ON THE LOOSE

RECALL	15	DEVELOPMENT
Susy		Resourceful, patient, helpful, smart
Mike (Monkey)		Playful, stubborn
Mrs. Bell		Worried
Mr. Sing		Busy, impatient
Jill Brown		Helpful

EVENTS: 30

On her first day of holidays Suzy hears something going on outside of her house. She goes out.

Her neighbour, Mrs. Bell is trying to get her brother's pet monkey out of a tree by offering him peanuts.

She is not successful, Mike just grabs peanuts and runs back up the tree.

Mr. Sing comes by. He is in a hurry, suggests monkey should be left in a zoo.

Jill Brown comes along and tries to get Mike by climbing up the tree. Mike just keeps going higher. Jill gives up.

Susy gets an idea and asks Mrs. Bell for a peanut.

Susy sits under the tree and eats peanuts from the sack. Mike comes down and joins her on her lap.

Susy returns to Mrs. Bell.

PLOT: 20

How to get the monkey out of the tree.

THEME: 20

Having patience and thinking out a problem is often better than taking useless action that leads to frustration.

Monkey on the Loose

It was only the first day of holidays, but already something was going on in front of Suzu's house. Suzu rushed outside. Her neighbor, Mrs. Bell, was looking up into an oak tree near the walk.

"What's in the tree?" Suzu said.

"It's Mike. A pet monkey," Mrs. Bell said. "I told my brother I'd keep it for the holidays. And wouldn't you know, the monkey's loose already. Already!"

Mrs. Bell had a little sack in one hand. She took one peanut from the sack. "Come on, Mike-come on."

Mike came down, grabbed the peanut, and climbed into the tree again. He curled his tail around a high branch and sat there, eating the peanut.

Mr. Sing came by. "What's going on?" he asked.

"A pet monkey is loose in the tree," Suzu said.

"I wish I could help," Mr. Sing said. "But I can't stop to catch a monkey. I have to catch a bus. Why don't you call the zoo? If he belonged to me, I'd take him to the zoo and leave him there."

Jill Brown came running down the street. "Did I hear that there's a monkey loose in that tree?" she said. "Let ME get him down."

Up she went. But the monkey went higher. When she could almost reach him, the monkey swung up to the branch above.

"This could go on all day," Mrs. Bell said

Jill came back down the tree.

Then Suzu thought of something. "Can I have a peanut?" she asked.

"Take the sack," Mrs. Bell said.

Suzu sat down under the tree. She ate a peanut. "Yum. Good," she said

Mike swung down to a low branch. Suzu ate another peanut. The monkey swung to the lowest branch and dropped to the ground. He hopped up on her lap. He put one long arm around her neck and dipped one little paw into the sack.

"Here's your monkey, Mrs. Bell," Suzu said.

"Thank you, Suzu," Mrs. Bell said. "I'll CERTAINLY be glad when the holidays are over."

GINN 720 LEVEL 8 (GRADE 3)

RETELLING OUTLINE: JAN AND GAIL

RECALL 15

DEVELOPMENT

Jan	bored, imaginative, sense of humour
Gail	imaginative, sense of humour
Gail's Mother	good sense of humour, tolerant
Jan's Mother	good sense of humour, tolerant
Gail's Father	good sense of humour, tolerant
Jan's Father	good sense of humour, tolerant
Jan's little sister	

EVENTS: 30

Jan and Gail are good friends who do everything together, Gail says she wishes she were Jan because she is tired of being herself and always doing the same things.

The girls decide to switch places and become each other.

Jan goes to Gail's house and announces to Gail's mother that she is Jan. Gail's mother plays along and tells Jan to expect her favourite vegetables - turnip - for supper. Jan hates turnips.

Gail arrives at Jan's house and Jan's mother goes along with the switch too, telling Gail that she can expect an omelet, her favourite, for supper. Gail hates omelets.

After dinner Gail is given bread and butter for dessert instead of the chocolate cake everyone else gets. When Gail asks where her cake is, Jan's mother explains that Gail always says that bread and butter is the best dessert in the world.

At Gail's house Jan finishes her dinner and is told by Gail's father that it's time to clear the table and do dishes.

When Jan complains that she hasn't had dessert, Gail's father explains that this is Thursday, chocolate ice cream night, and she never eats it. Gail's father also says that she does dishes every night.

At Jan's house Gail finds she is expected to sweep the floor every night and go to bed at seven-thirty. She announces she is going home.

At Gail's house Jan finishes dishes and is then told it is seven-thirty and bedtime. She also discovers that Gail sleeps on the back porch because she thinks it's healthy to sleep outside. She too decides is going home.

The two girls meet on the way home and complain to each other about what they have found out about each other's life style.

They realize simultaneously that their parents have put one over on them by leading them to believe things that were not true about each other.

Both see the humour in the situation and laugh.

PLOT: 20

How can Jan and Gail escape the boredom of their daily lives?

THEME: 20

You have to leave something familiar to realize how comfortable you are with it.

Other people's lives may seem more interesting than your own because you don't know what their lives are really like. (The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.)

It's best to be yourself.

Jan and Gail

Jan and Gail went everywhere together. They did everything together.

One summer day, when they were sitting on Mr. Mayer's front steps, halfway between Jan's house and Gail's house, Jan said, "Gail, this is what I wish, Gail, that I were you."

"Why do you want to be me?" asked Gail.

Jan put her chin on her hands. "I'm tired of being myself," she said. "Every morning I wake up in the same room, see the same sister, the same father and mother, brush the same teeth with the same toothbrush, eat the same breakfast."

"But it's the same at my house," said Gail. "I always wake up in the same room and look at the same brother and eat the same breakfast. Anyway, I do almost the same things that you do every day."

"But you don't do them exactly the same," said Jan. "It would be much more fun if I could be you and you could be me."

"That's silly," said Gail.

"No it isn't. It's magic," said Jan. "All we have to do is turn around once, and I say 'I am Gail!'

"And I say 'I am Jan'," said Gail.

They each took two steps backward and looked at each other.

"Hello Jan," said Gail.

"Hello Gail," said Jan.

"Well," said Jan, "it's almost time for supper. I'd better hurry. Good-bye, Jan. Have fun at my house. I mean, your house."

"Good-bye, Gail," said Gail." Don't forget to feed my cat. I mean your cat."

When Jan reached Gail's house, she rang the doorbell. Gail's mother opened the door and said, "Hello Jan."

"I'm not Jan," said Jan. "I'm Gail."

"Oh, I see," said Gail's mother. "Then wash your hands Gail. It is time for supper. We're having your favorite vegetable-turnips."

"Turnips are my favorite vegetable?" asked Jan, who couldn't stand them.

"Certainly they are," said Gail's mother. "You always have two helpings."

"Ugh!" said Jan to herself.

When Gail reached Jan's house, she walked right in, and into the kitchen. "What's for supper?" she asked.

"Oh," said Jan's mother, "are you staying for supper Gail?"

"Of course I am," said Gail, "and my name's Jan."

"Very well, Jan," said Jan's mother. "Wash your hands for supper. We're having your favorite-a great big omelet."

"What's my favorite?" asked Gail.

"I always give you an extra big helping," said Jan's mother.

"Ugh!" said Gail to herself, because if there was one thing she couldn't stand, it was an omelet. It tasted like wet newspaper to her.

When it was time for dessert, there was chocolate cake for Jan's mother and father and little sister, who kept calling her Gail, and bread and butter for Gail.

"Where's my cake?" said Gail.

"Why Jan, you know you never eat cake," said Jan's mother. "You always say that the best dessert in the world is bread."

"I do?" said Gail.

At [illegible] when Jan had finished most of her turnip, trying to look as [illegible] she liked it, Gail's father said, "Now it's time to clear the table and do the dishes Gail."

"But I haven't had dessert," complained Jan.

"Why, you know we always have chocolate ice cream for dessert on Thursday, and you don't eat chocolate ice cream," said Gail's father.

"I don't?" said Jan.

"Never!" said Gail's father.

"Maybe I'd like it now," said Jan. "Maybe I could try a little bit.

"I don't think that's a very good idea," said Gail's father. "If it made you sick, you couldn't wash the dishes."

"Wash the dishes?" said Jan in a small voice.

At Jan's house, Gail was sweeping the kitchen floor. Jan's mother had said that this was what Jan did every night before she went to bed at seven-thirty.

"Well!" said Gail to herself. "No wonder Jan wanted to be me-eating omelets, sweeping the kitchen, going to bed at seven-thirty."

Then she looked up at Jan's mother and said, "I'm going home."

"All right, Gail," said Jan's mother, laughing.

At Gail's house, Jan had just finished the dishes when Gail's father said, "Time for bed, Gail."

"At seven-thirty?" said Jan.

"Is it that late?" said Gail's father. "My goodness, by this time you're usually sound asleep on the back porch."

"The back porch?" said Jan.

"You always say that it's healthy to sleep outside," said Gail's father.

"Sly!" said Jan to herself. "I never realized that Gail was such a nut, eating turnips, washing the dishes, sleeping on the back porch."

Jan looked up at Gail's father and said, "I'm going home."

"All right," said Gail's father, smiling. "Good night, Jan."

Jan and Gail met under the street light in front of Mr. Mayer's house.

"Hello, Gail," said Gail, looking at Jan.

"Never mind calling me Gail," said Jan. "I wouldn't be you for all the money in the world. You didn't tell me that turnips were your favorite vegetable."

"Turnips?" said Gail. "I can't stand turnips. But you didn't tell me you loved omelets."

"Ugh!" said Jan. "I hate omelets almost as much as I hate washing dishes."

"But you sweep the kitchen floor every night," said Gail.

"I do not," said Jan, "and at least I don't sleep on the back porch."

"Who sleeps on the back porch?" cried Gail.

"But your father said..." said Jan.

"And your mother said..." said Gail.

Suddenly the two grils looked at each other and started to laugh. Their laughter sounded in the night like silver bells beneath the street lights, beneath the stars, beneath the soft black sky.

GINN 720 LEVEL 9

RETELLING OUTLINE: WHAT MARY JO WANTED

RECALL	15	DEVELOPMENT	15
Mary Jo		loves dogs, persistent, responsible patient, enterprising	
Father		sense of responsibility toward animals, patient, sense of humour, supportive	
Brother (Jefff)		likes to tease Mary Jo, silly	
Mother		patient, supportive	
Teddy		small, lovable, playful, cries a lot at night	
Laurie		Mary Jo's friend, helpful	

EVENTS: 30

Mary Jo wants a puppy more than anything. She often reads newspaper ads to her parents from "Pets for Sale".

Mary Jo's father points out that puppies need training, feeding, brushing, bathing, it takes a lot of responsibility to be a good owner. Mary Jo tries to convince him she can do all these things and be responsible.

Mary Jo reads a lot of dog books, draws dog pictures and writes dog poems. Fianlly, she writes a theme about why she wants a dog, and leaves it by her father's plate.

A new pet store opens. Mary Jo reads their ad for an opening day special on puppies. Her father feels she is now old enough for a pup, so she and her parents go down to pick one out.

They bring the pup home and he is kept in the kitchen where the floor can be covered with newspaper until he is housebroken.

After spending much time deciding, Mary Jo and her friend Laurie decide on the name Teddy for the pup.

Teddy squeaks and cries at night. Mary Jo tries various remedies like putting on a night light, giving him a snack and putting a toy dog in with him. Nothing works.

Teddy continues to cry unless Mary Jo is with him at night and by the end of the first week, the entire family, and especially Mary Jo, are very tired.

Mary Jo's mother finds her asleep on the kitchen floor one morning, and her mother and father begin to lose patience with the situation.

Mary Jo gets an idea. She decides to try setting up a cot in the kitchen and sleeping with Teddy until he is housebroken.

Her plan works, and the problem is solved.

PLOT: 20

How to keep Teddy quiet at night.

THEME: 20

Providing for a pet's physical needs is not enough, love and attention are also essential for the pet's well being.

What Mary Jo Wanted

Every time Mary Jo saw a dog, any dog -- big or little, black, white, old or young -- she wished it belonged to her.

"I would rather have a dog than anything on earth," she said at least twice a week, usually at the dinner table. She sighed. "I'd be the happiest person in this town if I had a puppy." She often read the ads from the newspaper under "Pets for Sale" out loud to her parents.

"Puppies must be trained. It takes a lot of time," said her father.

"I'd love to train a puppy!" said Mary Jo. "I'd do it all myself!"

"Puppies cry at night when you first bring them home," said her father. "Nobody gets any sleep."

"They cry because they're lonesome. I'll be the one to get up at night and talk to my puppy," said Mary Jo.

"They must be fed every day. They must have fresh water. They should be brushed. They must be given baths," said her father.

"I'd do it! I'd do it" said Mary Jo. "I want to feed and brush and wash a dog."

"A good owner must take the full responsibility for her pet," said her father.

"I would be responsible," said Mary Jo.

Mary Jo read dog books by the dozen. She drew pictures of dogs. She wrote dog stories and dog poems. One morning she put a two-page theme by her father's plate, "Why I Want a Dog."

It looked as if fate were on Mary Jo's side when a new pet store opened downtown.

She showed the big opening day ad in the newspaper to her parents. She read: "Special for This Opening. Small, lovable puppies. Only $19 while they last!"

"Can't we go down to see the new pet store? And the puppies?" Mary Jo begged.

"All right, Mary Jo. I believe you're old enough to take care

of a puppy," said her father.

"Oh," shouted Mary Jo. "Get your coats, everybody! Let's go".

"They are cute," said Mary Jo's mother when they stood gazing down at a little pen full of puppies in the new pet store.

"Cute!" said Mary Jo. "They're the sweetest creatures ever born in this world!"

Her father laughed. "Which one do you want?"

Mary Jo knew right away. One little furry baby had wobbled over to lick her fingers the minute she knelt beside the pen.

"This one," she said. "He came right to me. He's the most lovable!"

"Have him wrapped up then," said her father.

"Wrapped up?" said Mary Jo. Then she saw that her father was joking. He got out his billfold.

The first thing the family did when they got home was to put newspapers all over the kitchen floor.

"It's only until you're housebroken," she told him. He reached playfully for her shoe string and looked up into her face.

Mary Jo and her friend Laurie spent hours deciding on a name for him. They made lists and pored over the section of names at the back of the dictionary.

Jeff, her brother, suggested "Mr. Picklepone." That was the silliest name he could think of.

In the end they decided on "Teddy" because the puppy looked so much like a small teddy bear, and he even squeaked.

He squeaked and cried -- especially at night. No matter how cozy Mary Jo made his bed in the kitchen or how many times Teddy yawned at bedtime, he always woke as soon as everyone was in bed and the house was still. He woke and cried as if his heart would break. Mary Jo put a night-light in the kitchen, in case he was afraid of the dark. She gave him a little snack at bedtime, in case he was hungry. She put an old toy dog in bed with him, hoping he would think it was another puppy. But he didn't

Mary Jo walked sleepily from her warm bed out to the kitchen a dozen times a night to see Teddy. As long as she was there, he was

happy. He tried to get her to play as if it were the middle of the day instead of the middle of the night, and he licked her with his loving puppy tongue. As tired as she was, Mary Jo could never feel angry with him because he was so happy each time she appeared at the kitchen door.

But by the end of the first week she could hardly get up in the mornings. She was almost late for school. Everyone looked tired because although Mary Jo was the one who got up to soothe him, Teddy woke the others with his loud, sad little cries.

Finally one morning Mary Jo's mother found her asleep on the paper covered kitchen floor.

"Is this ever going to end?" Mary Jo's mother asked at the breakfast table. "I don't ever remember hearing of any puppy crying as many nights as this one has."

"Some of them get used to being alone faster than others I guess," said Mary Jo's father.

"But I'm beginning to wish we had never seen that dog!"

"I'm responsible," thought Mary Jo. "I've got to think of something to keep Teddy quiet."

That afternoon when she went to the basement to get some old newspapers for the kitchen floor she saw something that gave her an idea.

After dinner that night Mary Jo said, "You'll be able to sleep tonight. I've thought of a way to keep Teddy quiet."

"What is it?" asked her mother.

"You'll see, said Mary Jo. She went down the the basement.

Her parents heard her lugging something up the stairs. It was an old folding cot.

"I'm going to sleep in the kitchen until Teddy is housebroken and can sleep in my room," she said.

Her mother and father looked at each other.

"Why not?" said her father. "That's probably the only thing that will solve the problem."

And it did. Teddy slept without making one squeak all night with Mary Jo on the old cot just above his basket.

GINN 720 LEVEL 10

Retelling Outline: How Vasil Vanquished the Dragon

Character Analysis

Recall	15	Development
Dragon		green eyes, wings, terrible, cruel, cowardly
Vasil		kind, sympathetic, brave, intelligent
People of the Land		frightened, poor, desperate, sad
Vasil's children		

Events: 30

Terrible dragon comes to the Land and tells the people they must each bring him daily tributes of food or be eaten. Frightened, they do so.

The people finally run out of food, and the dragon starts taking people to his den. People try in vain to find a way to get rid of the dragon.

A man named Vasil comes along, after hearing of the problem, tells people he will try to get rid of the dragon.

Vasil meets the dragon, tells him he's come to give him a beating with his cudgel. The dragon tells him he can blow him away, and Vasil challenges him to see who can blow harder.

After the dragon blows, Vasil tricks him into covering his eyes while he blows, and hits him with the cudgel instead.

The dragon challenges Vasil at rock crushing, and is tricked again, when, seeing the dragon crush a rock to dust, Vasil suggests he can squeeze one until water runs from it.

The dragon becomes frightened, and offers Vasil anything he wants.

Vasil refuses, saying he has everything, and invites the dragon to come and see.

On the journey, the dragon sees some bullocks, and suggests Vasil get them one to eat. Vasil stalls, pretending he is getting rope to catch five bullocks. The dragon loses patience, and gets one himself.

The dragon asks Vasil to get wood to roast the bullocks. Again Vasil stalls, pretending he wants a dozen trees, and can't decide which are the thickest, and again the dragon is tricked into doing the task himself.

The dragon invites Vasil to join him and eat. Vasil refuses, saying one bullock is just a bite for him.

Vasil and the dragon, nearing Vasil's house are spotted by Vasil's children, who call out happily at seeing their father.

The dragon, not hearing the children clearly, asks Vasil what they are saying. Vasil tells him they are hungry, and happy to see the dragon being brought for dinner.

The dragon, believing he is to be their dinner, runs away and falls in a bog and drowns.

Plot: 20

How can the terrible dragon be gotten rid of?

Theme: 20

Vague threats are more frightening than face-to-face threats.
Cruel bullies are usually cowards.
Brain is mightier than brawn.
You can be overcome by your own fear.

How Vasil Vanquished the Dragon

To a certain land there once came a most fearful and terrible dragon. He dug himself out a deep hole by a mountain in the midst of a forest, and lay down to rest.

Whether he rested long or not no one now recalls, but the moment he rose he shouted loudly for all to hear:

"Come, folk, men and women, old and young, you must each of you bring me a tribute every day: one of you can bring me a cow, another a lamb, and a third-a pig! He who obeys, will live. But he who does not, will die, for him I will devour! "

The people were frightened, and they began paying the Dragon the tribute he asked for. This went on for a long time till at last there came a day when there was nothing left to bring, for they had all become extremely poor. But the Dragon was of the kind that could not let a day pass without gorging himself.. So he began flying from village to village, seizing people and carrying them off to his den.

The people went about wailing like lost souls, vainly trying to find a way to deliver themselves from the cruel Dragon.

Now at that very time a man named Vasil came to those parts, and he found that the people went about sad and disheartened, wringing their hands and weeping loudly.

"What is the trouble?" asked he. "Why are you all weeping?"

The people told him of their trouble, and Vasil tried to comfort them.

"Calm yourselves," said he. "I will try to save you from the Dragon."

And taking a heavy cudgel, he went to the forest where the Dragon lived.

The Dragon saw him, and rolling his great green eyes, asked:

"Why have you come here with that cudgel?"

"To give you a beating! " Vasil replied.

"My, how brave you are!" said the Dragon. "You had better run away while you still can. For I only have to blow once, and you will be blown clean away from here, a full three versts!"

Vasil smiled

"Don't you boast, you old scarecrow," said he. "I've seen worse monsters than you! We'll see which of us can blow the harder. Go on, blow!"

And the Dragon blew so hard that the leaves rained down from the trees, and Vasil was thrown to his knees.

"Ha, that's nothing!" said he, springing to his feet. "Why, it's enough to make a cat laugh! Now let me try. Only first you must bandage your eyes if you don't want them to jump out of their sockets."

The Dragon tied a kerchief over his eyes, and Vasil came up and struck him such a blow on the head with his cudgel that sparks poured from the Dragon's eyes.

"Can it be that you are stronger than I?" the Dragon asked. "Lets try again and see which of us is fastest at crushing a rock."

And the Dragon seized a rock weighing all of a hundred poods and squeezed it with his claws so hard that the dust rose up in clouds.

"There's nothing to that!" laughed Vasil. "Let's see you queeze it so that the water will run from it."

The Dragon was frightened. He was beginning to feel that Vasil was the stronger of the two, and glancing at Vasil's cudgel, said:

"Ask of me what you will, and you shall have it."

"I don't need anything," Vasil replied. "I have plenty of everything in the house, more than you have."

"Can that be true?" asked the Dragon in disbelief.

"If you don't believe me, come and see for yourself!"

So they got into a cart and drove off.

By now the Dragon was becoming very hungry. He saw a herd of bullocks on the edge of the forest and he said to Vasil:

"Go and catch a bullock and we'll have a bite to eat; "

And Vasil went to the forest and began stripping bast from the lime-trees. The Dragon waited and waited, and at last went to look for him.

"What is taking you so long?" he asked him.

"Can't you see I am stripping bast from the lime-trees," Vasil replied.

"What do you need bast for?"

"To make some rope so as to catch us five bullocks for dinner."

"What do we need five bullocks for? One is enough."

And the Dragon caught a bullock by the nape of its neck and dragged it to the cart.

"Now go and bring us some wood to roast the bullock," said he to Vasil.

And Vasil sat down under an oak tree in the forest, closed his eyes, and chuckled to himself.

The Dragon waited for him for a long time, and at last, losing patience, went to look for him.

"What is taking you so long?" he asked him.

"I want to take a dozen oaks or so, so I'm trying to pick the thickest among them."

"What do we want with a dozen oaks? One oak is enough," said the Dragon, and giving one powerful tug, he pulled out the thickest of the oaks.

He roasted the bullock and invited Vasil to join him.

"Go ahead and eat it yourself," said Vasil. "I'll have something at home. What's one bullock for me-just a bite!"

The Dragon ate the bullock and licked his lips. They rode on and soon came to Vasil's house. The children saw their father coming from a distance, and they cried out joyously:

"Father's coming! Father's coming!"

But the Dragon did not catch the words and asked:

"What are the children shouting?"

They are pleased that I am bringing you home for their dinner. They're very hungry."

By now the Dragon was badly frightened, so he jumped from the cart and took to his heels. But he missed the road and landed in a bog. The bog was very deep, so deep indeed that the bottom could not be reached, and the Dragon sank down, down, down, and was drowned. And so that was the end of him.

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL